



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-0001

HURRICANE RITA RESPONSE

General HUD Information

There are approximately 40,127 units of HUD-assisted or insured housing in the affected region. This number includes 540 units of elderly housing and 81 units of housing for the disabled.

Public and Indian Housing (PIH)

HUD has completed verifying which vacant public housing units are in livable condition and available for housing evacuees. Field office staff contacted every public housing agency in the nation to identify: the number of public housing units currently available, those that could be made ready for occupancy in five to seven days, and available vouchers. HUD has identified over 39,000 vacant public housing units and available vouchers nationwide.

All physical inspections of both public housing and multifamily properties in the impacted counties in Louisiana and Texas have been postponed.

Section 8 administrative fees set aside for emergencies (\$1.3 million) can be used for any administrative cost related to the Section 8 Program, including services to dislocated residents, staffing, the purchase of equipment and office furnishings and/or overtime for staff. These funds may not be used for vouchers and are available after an assessment of the requesting Housing Authority's needs and requirements.

The Public Housing Capital Fund has a Reserve for Emergencies and Natural Disasters in the amount of \$29.7 million for FY 2005. These funds can only be used to repair and replace existing public housing that was directly impacted by Hurricane Rita. PHAs must submit applications to HUD for these funds.

PIH's Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) is in the process of assessing damage at Indian reservations in Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma caused by Hurricane Rita. ONAP is coordinating its relief efforts with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Indian Health Service, and other Federal, tribal, and private sector service providers. ONAP has also reserved funding from the Indian Community Development Block Grant Program's Imminent Threat fund to assist tribes that suffered damage from Hurricane Rita.

Community Planning and Development (CPD)

HUD waived three requirements of the Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESG). The requirements waived: reduce the public comment period from 30 days to 3 days for any substantial changes to the Consolidated Plan; allow privately owned single units of housing to be used for temporary shelter; and extend the expenditure and obligation deadline requirements for one year.

HUD waived various requirements of the Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS Program (HOPWA). The requirements waived: reduce the comment period from 30 days to 3 days

for any substantial changes to the Consolidate Plan; permit a client to self-certify income and HIV/AIDS status during the first 60 days of assistance; allow flexibility for rental housing by removing current fair market rate limits; allow state and local housing safety codes to supercede Federal standards; prioritize displaced persons for housing and relax one-year lease requirements.

A series of HOME Program waivers were issued for areas affected by Hurricane Rita that correspond to the HOME waivers issued for areas affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Housing

HUD issued a notice reminding lenders that a 90-day foreclosure moratorium will be extended to all areas affected by Hurricane Rita and designated by President Bush as disaster areas.

For the states of Texas and Louisiana, HUD staff has commenced preliminary damage assessments on multifamily properties via telephone.

The Department has postponed physical inspections of developments for a minimum of thirty days in the affected counties in Texas. The Department will conduct another evaluation at the end of that period as to whether it will continue to postpone the inspections in the impacted areas. The physical inspections have already been postponed indefinitely for the state of Louisiana.

For the Multifamily portfolio, HUD Notice 04-22 and Mortgagee Letter 2004-38 are in effect and address waivers of Handbooks, Notices, etc., priority for permanent rental housing, multiple occupants in a unit, leases and rents, use of community space, occupancy requirements, use of escrows, evictions of current residents, insurance loss draft approval, and other guidance on Section 8 assisted housing.

HUD insures a \$104 million mortgage loan to Memorial Hermann Baptist Hospital in Beaumont, TX. The hospital is operating solely on generator power and is providing only emergency services at this time. The day surgery and laboratory areas suffered water damage, and the parent company (Memorial Hermann) is dispatching an engineer to perform a damage assessment. HUD will be in consultation with hospital management in the next few days to discuss the hospital's needs and options for financial assistance.

Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO)

HUD is working with its fair housing partners throughout the Gulf and surrounding region to inform evacuees of their fair housing rights. HUD has staff on the ground assisting in response to allegations of housing discrimination, and is working with the Ad Council to launch a Public Service Announcement campaign that will better inform evacuees of their rights and responsibilities under the Fair Housing Act. President Bush is committed to ensuring that no one displaced by these storms is denied housing opportunities because of their race or nationality.